

## *A Prisoner in the Castle*

Then suddenly, the journey was over. The driver pulled me down from the carriage. He threw my bag beside me. In a moment, the carriage and the driver had disappeared. I had arrived at Castle Dracula!

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I looked up at the high castle walls. There were no lights in any of the windows. In front of me was a great wooden door.

As I stood there, I heard the door being unlocked. It opened slowly. A very tall old man was standing there. He held a lamp in his hand. His hair and face were white and he was dressed in black. He held his lamp up high and said, 'Welcome to my home. Enter Castle Dracula, Mr Harker.'

As I stepped inside, Count Dracula took hold of my arm. He was terribly strong and his hand was as cold as ice. The Count locked the door carefully and put the keys into his pocket.

I followed him down long passages and up winding<sup>8</sup> stairs. I walked like a man in a dream. At last, the Count opened a door and led me into a room without windows. I could see two open doors. Through one door, I could see a bedroom. Through the other door, I could see food and drink on a table.

'When you are ready, my dear friend,' the Count said, 'I shall be waiting for you.'

In a few minutes, I was sitting at the table. I was very hungry. The Count told me he had already eaten.

Later, we sat together near the fire. The Count spoke good English and he asked me many questions. I was tired and I began





*'Welcome to my home. Enter Castle Dracula, Mr Harker.'*



## A Prisoner in the Castle

to feel very ill. The castle was completely silent. But outside the wolves were howling.

'Can you hear the children of the night?' the Count said quietly. 'Listen to their music!'

Count Dracula's face was very close to mine. The fire made his eyes shine with a red light. There was an unpleasant smell in the room. I wondered what it was. The Count smiled. He had very red lips and his teeth were long and sharp.

'You are tired,' he said. 'It is time for you to sleep.'

That night, I had strange and terrible dreams. In my dreams, I heard the sound of wolves and strange laughter.

When I woke up, it was late in the morning. There was fresh food in the other room and a note from the Count on the table.

*I have to leave you alone today, I read. You can go anywhere in the Castle. But some doors are locked. Do not try to open them. D.*

I saw no one all day. But I found the Count's library. It was full of books about England and I spent the day reading them. I was still reading when Count Dracula returned in the evening.

'These books are my good friends,' he said. 'They have taught me a lot about your country. And now I have you, Mr Harker, to talk to.'

'You speak English well, Count,' I said. The Count smiled and showed his sharp, white teeth.

'You must tell me about my new house,' he said. 'And you have papers for me to sign.'

I showed Count Dracula the maps and photographs I had brought with me.

'The house is about 22 kilometres to the east of London,' I told him. 'It is large and parts of it are very old.'

'Good,' said the Count. 'I have always lived in an old house. I could not live in a new one.'

'The gardens have a high wall around them,' I went on. 'This is a photograph of the chapel<sup>9</sup>. It is the oldest part of the house.'

'So I shall be near the tombs<sup>10</sup> of the dead,' said Count



Dracula quietly. He held the photograph in his hand. For the first time, I noticed his long, pointed nails.

The Count went on talking all night long. Once, I must have fallen asleep. I sat up suddenly. Count Dracula was leaning<sup>11</sup> over me. His breath had a terrible smell. What did it remind me of? As I opened my eyes he turned away.

'Well, my friend,' said Dracula, 'We have been talking all night. You are tired. Go to bed and sleep.'

But I did not sleep well. My mind was troubled. Once more, I had terrible dreams.

It was very early when I woke up. I decided to dress and shave<sup>12</sup>.

I looked round my bedroom. To my surprise, there was no mirror. Fortunately, I had brought a small shaving mirror with me. I hung it by the window and began to shave.

'Good morning, my friend,' said a voice behind me. I was so surprised that my razor slipped and I cut myself. I turned. There





stood Count Dracula! He had come up behind me. Why had I not seen his face in my mirror?

The Count saw the blood on my face. He made a strange sound and his hands moved towards my throat. His eyes shone with red fire. Then his hands touched the cross around my neck and the fire in his eyes disappeared.

'Take care,' he said. 'It is dangerous to cut yourself in Castle Dracula. And this mirror is not needed here.'

As he spoke, he threw my mirror out of the open window. It broke on the stones far below. The Count turned and left the room. When I went to have my breakfast, he had gone. I was by myself once again.

I was very restless. I spent the day looking round the castle. Wherever I went, I found locked doors. Some windows opened but they were high up in the castle walls. The ground was hundreds of metres below.

There was no way out of the castle. Except for Count Dracula, I was completely alone. Was I a prisoner in this strange and terrible place?

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*The Vampires*

Time passed slowly. I always saw the Count at night. During the day, I sat in the library, reading a book. Sometimes I walked slowly through the long passages of the castle.

The papers were signed and I was ready to leave. But Count Dracula would not let me go. Every evening, he asked me more questions about England. Every evening, I asked to leave. But he always smiled and would not answer.



I was full of fear. The Count had a strange power over me which grew stronger every day. I could not think clearly. Would I ever escape from Castle Dracula?

Then one day, I found a room with an unlocked door. As soon as I went into the room, I felt very tired. I lay down on a couch<sup>13</sup> opposite the window.

When I opened my eyes, it was getting dark. But the air was full of golden dust. It slowly changed into the shapes of three young women. They were very beautiful. I felt afraid of them and yet I wanted them to touch me. I wanted them to kiss me with their soft, red lips. My body felt heavy. I could not move.

'Go on,' one woman said to another, 'you are the first. But he is young and strong. There will be kisses for us all!'

One of the women moved towards me. She smiled. Her teeth were sharp and white. I closed my eyes as she leant over me. I felt her long hair on my face. She made a strange sound and licked her





## *The Vampires*

red lips. Her sharp teeth touched my throat. Now, I thought, now, now! Kiss me, kiss me!

There was a sudden shout. Count Dracula had come into the room and pulled the woman away from me.

'Get back, he is mine. How dare you touch him!' he cried.

'Oh, you are cruel,' said the woman, with a terrible laugh. 'Have you never been in love?'

'You know I have,' the Count replied. 'That is why you are here. Wait a little longer, you will have your chance!'

I must have fainted<sup>14</sup>. When I woke again, I was in my own room. It was daylight. The sun was shining brightly. I could see the gold cross on the table, where I had left it.

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It was now 19th May. I stayed near my room all day. When I saw the Count in the evening, it was difficult to hide my fear. But he smiled as usual and said, 'My dear Mr Harker, I am happy to have you as my guest. But I know you want to see your Mina again.'

The Count put some paper and three envelopes on the table.

'The post in Transylvania is not good,' he said. 'But write what I tell you and Mina will get your letters.'

He told me what to write. He made me put dates on the letters. The last letter was dated 29th June. What could I do? I was terribly afraid. I wrote down the Count's words. In the last letter, I told Mina that I had left the castle and was on my way home.

I knew then that Count Dracula meant to kill me. But not yet. It was six weeks until 29th June. I had six more weeks to live!

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The days went by. I was Dracula's prisoner and he . . . what was he? Would I ever know the truth about him?



Then it was 29th June. That night, Count Dracula spoke to me.

'My dear friend, you and I must part. Tomorrow I must go to England. Perhaps one day we shall meet again.'

What did he mean? I had to find out the truth. I decided to follow Dracula to his room. He went in and locked the door behind him. I heard a window open.

I looked out of a window in the passage. I could see the window of the Count's room. As I watched, Dracula came out of the window and moved down the wall – head first! His black cloak looked like the wings of a huge bird. In the bright moonlight, I watched him move down the wall and out of sight!

I had to think. I had to make a plan. I went back to my room and looked again at my book about Transylvania. Vampires always hunted and killed at night. Sometimes they became animals. But during the day, vampires lost their strange powers.

I had never seen Count Dracula during the day. If I went to his room in daylight, perhaps he could not harm me. Perhaps I could take his keys and escape at last.

All night, I waited by the window in the passage. At dawn<sup>15</sup>, Count Dracula returned. When the sun was high in the sky, I climbed out of the window. I moved carefully down the wall and across to the Count's open window.

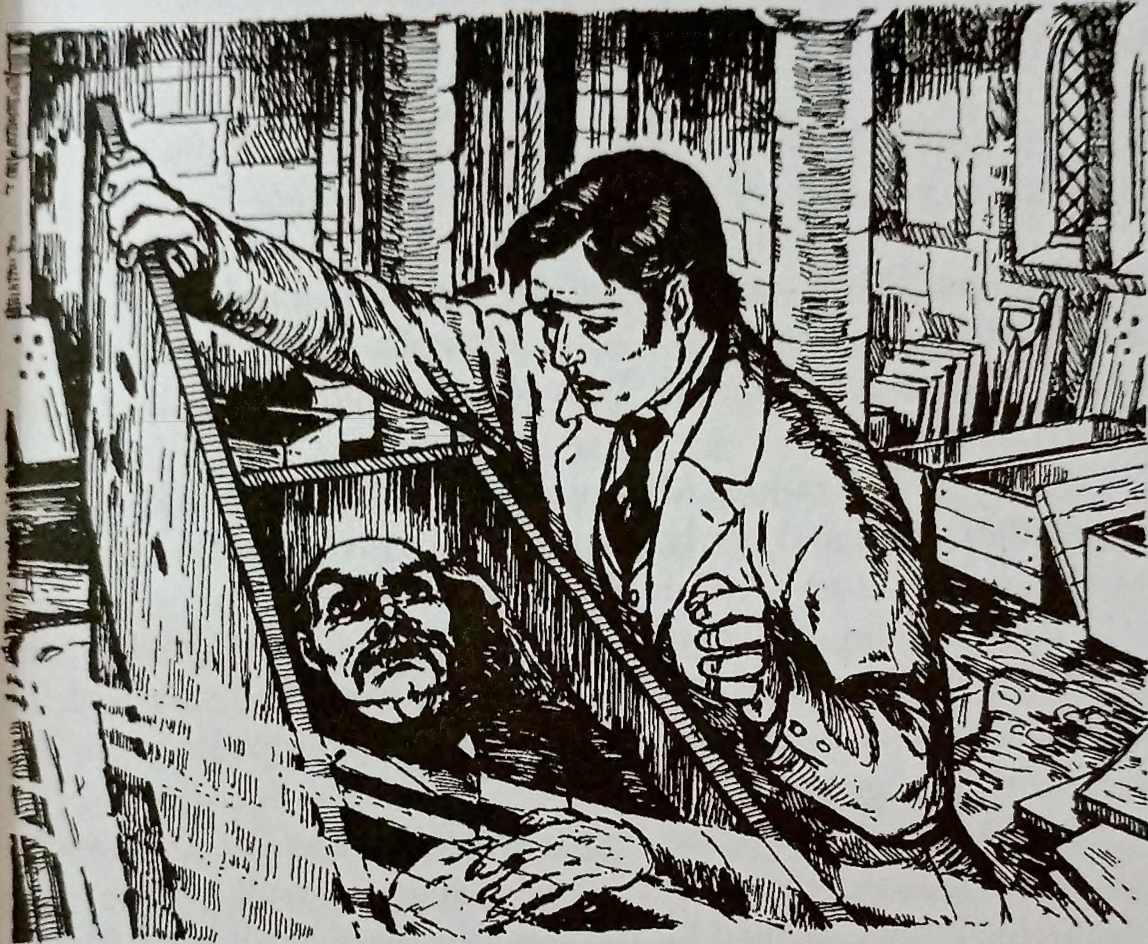
There was nothing in the room except a great heap of golden coins. One door was locked. But the second one opened and I went through it. A stone stairway went down and down to a long passage. I was in an old chapel. The stones in the floor had been taken away. There were great holes where the earth had been.

The chapel was full of wooden boxes – fifty of them. Their lids had not been fixed on. Each box was full of earth.

One box was covered and I lifted the lid. There, on a heap of earth, lay Count Dracula!

His white hair was now dark grey. His thin, white face was fat and red. Fresh blood ran from his lips and there was a terrible





smell, the smell of blood! The Vampire was resting after his meal. His eyes were open, but he did not move. I could see his long, white teeth.

At that moment, I heard shouts and the sound of many feet. I ran back through the door and into the passage. The door closed behind me. I stood there, listening.

The chapel was full of men. They were hammering<sup>16</sup> down the lids of the boxes. Then I heard them pulling the boxes along the ground. A door was shut and locked. Count Dracula was on his way to England and I was locked inside his castle! I ran down the passage, up the stone stairs and back to the Count's room. I put some of the gold coins in my pockets and ran to the open window. The ground was many metres below. With a prayer to God, I climbed out of the window and moved slowly down the wall . . .